

Decision Record
For
Pile Burning in Riparian Reserves
DNA No. 1 to EA OR125-99-05

Background:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Coos Bay District previously prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA OR125-99-05) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) that in part, evaluated the effect of prescribed burning in riparian reserves to reduce hazardous fuel loadings and to prepare sites for reforestation. The EA analyzed Proposed Action and No Action alternatives. A thirty-day public comment period ended July 31, 2002.

The BLM has reviewed a prescribed fire project in the Umpqua Field Office. Through a Documentation of NEPA Adequacy (DNA), BLM has determined that the previously prepared EA OR125-99-05 adequately analyzed this new action, and therefore a new EA is not needed.

Survey and Manage:

Both project areas underwent pre-disturbance surveys for the hardwood conversion activities that occurred in those areas. No threatened or endangered plants occur in either of the project areas. One Category B Survey and Manage (S&M) plant species occurs in the vicinity of the North Fork Coquille project area. Two piles are located approximately 35 feet from western red cedar trees serving as hosts to the S&M species. Project Design Criteria (PDC) for the two affected piles includes allowing burning of the piles under cool conditions.

The project areas are located in areas where Special Status Species (marbled murrelets and spotted owls) occur. Project Design Criteria (PDC) for burning projects are outlined in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Biological Opinion (BO) #1-7-98-F-079. The BO allows for prescribed burning as long as it occurs outside the designated nesting season for these species. Burning must be completed before March 1.

Both project areas occur along stream channels that are inhabited by threatened and threatened candidate fish species. A determination of No Effect was made for the proposed prescribed fire activities because there is no potential for sediment delivery to the nearby stream channels. PDC's for the project areas include mulching of the burned areas with straw to further stabilize the burn areas. To prevent the potential of harassment of listed and candidate species, PDC's include a no burning restriction during periods when listed and candidate species are present in the stream channels adjacent to the project areas. A fisheries biologist will be on site to make the presence determination before burning proceeds.

Decision:

My decision is to adopt the Proposed Action of EA OR125-99-05 for the prescribed burning of slash piles in riparian reserves as described in DNA No.1 for the Umpqua Field Office and recommendations from specialist reports. Design features are accepted as described therein, including:

- Burning will take place in the fall/winter under cool and wet conditions when fire spread from pile locations will be minimized.
- Operations will be completed before March 1, 2003
- Streams adjacent to the project area will be surveyed by a fisheries biologist immediately before project implementation to determine the presence or absence of listed or candidate fish species.
- After burning, exposed soil from the burned piles will be mulched with straw.

Rationale for Decision:

The proposed action will eliminate hazardous fuel accumulations along primary and secondary forest roads and will create additional planting spots in the project areas promoting riparian restoration activities and attainment of Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives.

Monitoring:

The BLM prescribed fire burn boss providing oversight for the burning will perform compliance monitoring of the Proposed Action. It is the Burn Boss's responsibility to ensure compliance with the PDC's.

Decision Recommended by:

NRSA Kathy Wall	<u>/s/KathyWall</u>	Date: <u>10/16/02</u>
NRSA Ralph Thomas	<u>/s/ Ralph L. Thomas</u>	Date: <u>10/16/02</u>
NRSA Steve Fowler	<u>/s/StevenD.Fowler</u>	Date: <u>10/16/02</u>

Decision Approved by:

Umpqua Field Office Manager Elaine Raper:	<u>M. Elaine Raper</u>	Date: <u>10/16/02</u>
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